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Report on the population and housing census in the People's Republic of Bulgaria

Prepared by the Committee of the Bulgarian Unified Social Information System

In accordance with Bulgaria's plans and preparations, a population and housing census will commence on 4 December 1985. For this purpose, a comprehensive work programme and a number of sub-programmes have been prepared on the basis of a special concept developed over a number of years and pursuant to which the taking of the census will form part of a wider project.

This project has a number of special features:

A. It is based on the combining and interaction of data from routine (close-interval) returns of demographic statistics and of data from what will be a comprehensive and qualitatively new complete-coverage census. In other words, it is not Bulgaria's intention to replace routine demographic returns with complete-coverage censuses, or to set the two types of demographic statistics against each other, but rather to combine them so that each enriches the other;

B. It provides for improvement of the traditional system of population and housing censuses through, in particular, the inclusion of a considerably greater number of observation indices so as to reflect more fully the changes which have occurred in demographic, educational, social and economic structures, processes and phenomena in Bulgaria. Since demographic processes have become more complex, the plan provides for an increase in the sophistication of the traditional population and housing census system, primarily through the introduction of new observation indices;

C. In addition to the above enhancement of the traditional census system, it provides for the making of entirely new observations which will bring under statistical study a number of processes and phenomena that are normally not included in censuses. These observations, which are especially apposite at the

present time, are also of great importance for the future of demography, sociology, economics, etc. In particular, it is proposed to supplement the improved traditional population census with such important specialized observations as those of: birth rate and reproductive behaviour; migration and migratory behaviour; the population's potential for work and the realization of that potential; the town/countryside system; the individual - his problems, the changes in his personality, and his plans; and the fitness and health of the population. In practice, this makes six specialized families of observations, which will be effected by means of representative sampling under the direction of specialized groups of well-known scientists and specialists well known in Bulgaria. The actual sampling will, moreover, be carried out by groups of scientists and leading specialists - demographers, sociologists, economists, physiologists, psychologists, doctors of various specialities, etc.

D. As a result of the combining of an improved traditional complete-coverage census with a system comprising a large number of specialized sample surveys of questions of particular topical and long-term importance, the census project as a whole will attain a new level of quality. That is an especially noteworthy point, for it is precisely through the combination and integration of the old and the new that great opportunities will be created of observing spheres, processes and phenomena that have so far been inaccessible whether by routine demographic returns or by traditional population censuses.

E. It lends itself to considerably wider integration, that is to say, the integration of demographic statistics with social and economic statistics. It also offers a vast potential for the complete integration of demographic statistics with the other types of statistics, integration that would enrich each category of statistics concerned, raise it to a qualitatively new level and greatly enhance its information value.

F. Although the complete-coverage improved traditional population census will be carried out, i.e. begin and end early in December 1985, the project as a whole will be far from completed by the end of 1985. The specialized demographic, socio-economic, socio-medical and other sample observations, which, as already pointed out, will be conducted under the direction and with the participation of scientists and specialists in the corresponding sectors, will continue into 1986. Only when all those observations have been concluded and when all the information collected by the traditional population census and the specialized sample observations has been processed, systematized, classified and analysed will all the advantages and possibilities of this plan be secured and realized.

G. It will make possible the updating of the existing and newly established socio-demographic information systems. The traditional census will serve as a basis for updating the information base of the unified civil registration system, for establishing a new information system concerning housing supply, and for drawing up an exhaustive land register of settlements.

Completion of the project should result in the availability of data in such important areas as:

1. Characteristics of the Bulgarian household; characteristics of a large Bulgarian family; characteristics of a small Bulgarian family.

2. State of various population categories: permanent population and legal population, i.e. the registered population.

3. State of demographic structures and, in particular, of those pertaining to sex, age, family status and fertility.

4. Statistical description of levels of education and individual skills.

5. Socio-economic characteristics of the population: main occupation and additional occupation; main source of income and additional sources of income, place of work; population distribution by sectors, subsectors and activities; sectoral population density, etc.

Particular attention will be paid to social groups. In this respect, questions connected with agricultural workers, the intelligentsia, etc. will be elucidated in greater detail.

6. Migration of the population: the results of the project will provide a basis for a full investigation.

7. The material aspects of family life: the simultaneous conduct of a housing and a population census will create favourable conditions for studying this question. Full details will be obtained concerning dwellings, including the type of dwelling, design, number of storeys and age, as well as concerning the architectural and amenity aspects. Information will also be obtained on the link between housing and the environment, between houses, summer cottages and recreation in suburban districts, between housing and public services, and between individual flats and blocks of flats. A study will be made of the links between housing and income and between housing and the performance of the main functions of a modern Bulgarian family - reproduction, socialization and work.

8. The fitness of the population to perform work and social activities: information will be obtained from a study of their physical and psychological characteristics. Data will also be obtained on the levels of general education and specialized education and on production experience, on the readiness of the Bulgarian to work and perform social activities, on the corresponding needs of the people and the satisfaction of those needs, and on the place of these activities in the general scheme of activities and values. In addition, a wealth of data will be obtained on the value attached by the people to material, spiritual and community matters and to social manifestations.

9. The attitude of families to children. Other data will show how families see their need for children. The psychological predisposition to a specific number of children in the family will be ascertained, as will the reproductive goals of families within the system of family and parental objectives. The reproductive interests of families and parents will be elucidated. The reproductive urge and motives for the birth of children will be clarified and greater light shed on the value attached to reproduction and on the impact of the social environment and its hierarchical levels on fertility. More information will be obtained concerning migratory processes, migration needs, psychological predisposition towards migration, objectives and interest in migrating, value attached to and motives for migrating, conditions and factors of migration, migration of workers, etc.

10. The people's aims in life: their enterprise and initiative; their aspirations; how they regard their responsibilities at the personal and community levels; how they combine initiative at work with discipline at work.

It is expected that the implementation of the population and housing census will provide Bulgaria with, on the one hand, detailed and comprehensive information on more new processes and phenomena than ever before, and on the other, a fruitful new link between the various blocks of information. The possession of abundant, extensively co-ordinated information on the most recent processes, phenomena, structures and bonds will enable our society better to comprehend many new facets of its life and development, provide scientists and researchers with a wealth of material for development and creative work and finally, give social management and planning organs a much sounder basis for the taking of tactical as well as strategic decisions.